

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on "International Proposals to Regulate the Internet"
May 31, 2012
(As Prepared for Delivery)

The international community will meet this December to decide whether to regulate the Internet under rules designed for 1980s era telephone networks. On the table is a proposal to expand the jurisdiction of the United Nation's International Telecommunications Union to cover the Internet, moving away from the current multi-stakeholder governance model that has fostered the modern Internet. Also at issue is whether to impose rate regulation on the exchange of Internet traffic across national borders. Both of these are terrible ideas.

In a time of economic uncertainty and turmoil, the Internet remains a job creation engine that fosters innovation, brings the people of the world together in new ways, and drives global discussion of important social matters. The Internet has become this economic and social juggernaut not because governmental actors willed it to be so, but because the government took a step back and let the private sector drive its evolution. The non-regulatory, multi-stakeholder model allows the Internet community to guide its evolution and has provided the flexibility the Internet needs to flourish as the demands placed on it grow.

The ITU and the international "settlement-of-rates" regime were designed around old-fashioned telephone networks and services when there was less competition. The Internet is a different technology and this is a different era. International regulatory intrusion into the Internet would have disastrous results not just for the United States, but for people around the world. I strongly urge the administration to continue U.S. support for the multi-stakeholder model in its talks leading up to and in Dubai this December.

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